

BOB HOLDEN
GOVERNOR




CAROL RUSSELL FISCHER
DIRECTOR OF REVENUE

RAYMOND HUNE
DIRECTOR

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE
DIVISION OF MOTOR VEHICLE AND DRIVERS LICENSING
CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE BUREAU
POST OFFICE BOX 629
JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI 65105-0629
Phone: (573) 751-4510
Fax: (573) 751-5327
E-MAIL: dormail@dor.mo.gov

To: School Superintendents

From:  Lynn Bexten, Administrator
Customer Assistance Bureau

Date: December 17, 2004

Subject: School Bus Permit/Endorsement Requirements

This memorandum includes information about the new School Bus Endorsement (SBE) requirements resulting from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Improvement Act (MCSIA), September 30, 2002. This legislation requires any operator of a commercial motor vehicle transporting primary, secondary, or preprimary students to have a standardized school bus endorsement on the face of their commercial driver license by September 30, 2005. This applies to public and private school transportation from home to school, school to home, and school sponsored events. Any school bus driver who has not obtained the new "S" endorsement by this date may be subject to a violation of driving a Commercial Motor Vehicle without the required endorsement. The current Missouri school bus permit alone will not meet this requirement.

Effective May 31, 2005, the Missouri Department of Revenue will issue a SBE to a new applicant who:

1. Passes the knowledge and skills test for obtaining a CDL with Passenger vehicle endorsement.
2. Passes a new knowledge test for school bus "S" endorsement which must include the following three topics:
 - (i) Loading and unloading children, including the safe operation of stop signal devices, external mirror systems, flashing lights, and other warning and passenger safety devices.
 - (ii) Emergency exits and procedures for safely evacuating passengers in an emergency.
 - (iii) State and Federal laws and regulations related to safely traversing highway rail grade crossings.
3. Passes a driving skills test in a school bus of the same vehicle group, as the school bus applicant will drive.

The Department of Revenue, Missouri State Highway Patrol (MSHP), and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) agreed to adopt the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration approved school bus written test to meet the knowledge test requirements. The MSHP Examination Division is scheduled to begin using the new test as of January 3, 2005.

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A new study guide is available on the department's web site at: www.dor.mo.gov/mvdl/drivers and in limited supply at MSHP examination stations. When printing is complete we will make them available in local license offices.

If you have drivers who currently reside in another state and hold an out-of-state CDL document, they must meet the requirements for the SBE in their licensing state and obtain the "S" endorsement on their CDL to be eligible for a Missouri school bus permit. In this situation, the driver will be issued a separate Missouri School Bus Permit document to be carried with their out of state CDL when all background record checks and medical forms have been reviewed by the Department of Revenue.

Current Missouri Type 1, school bus permit holders must also meet additional federal requirements to obtain the "S" endorsement on their CDL prior to September 30, 2005.

Missouri has opted to allow for grandfathering of the driving skills test as allowed in the rule. An applicant must certify and the state must verify during the two-year period immediately prior to applying for the SBE, the applicant:

1. Held a valid CDL with a passenger endorsement to operate a school bus representative of the group he or she will be driving;
2. Met federal driving history review criteria as defined by FMCSA regulations Part 383.123 (b); and
3. Has been regularly employed as a school bus driver and provides evidence of such employment.

To facilitate the testing processes for current school bus permit holders the department will be sending letters to all current Type 1 permit holders. The letter will ask each driver to submit new school bus knowledge test results and the grandfathering application form to the department to begin the eligibility review. Your drivers may complete the new written test any time after January 3, 2005; however, do not submit the test results to the school bus processing area unless accompanied by the SBE grandfathering application.

If the driver is not eligible, based on the application form and driving history review, a letter will be sent to the driver and employer asking for a completed school bus driving skills test to be submitted. When requirements have been met, the driver will receive notice of approval for a SBE and instructions for updating their CDL. Drivers who are not due for renewal of their current school bus permit will be eligible to receive a shorter term CDL license with the SBE, which will expire on the same date as their previous school bus permit, to avoid the cost of a new medical and criminal record check at the time of transition. The cost for this short-term CDL will be approximately \$2.50 to cover the office processing fees. This short-term document process will not be in effect after September 30, 2005.

If you have drivers who currently hold an out-of-state CDL and a Missouri school bus permit, they must meet the requirements for the SBE in their licensing state and obtain the "S" endorsement on their CDL to be eligible to drive a school bus in Missouri. Submission of a copy of the out-of-state test results form, issued after September 30, 2002, and a photocopy of their CDL with passenger and school bus endorsement will meet these requirements. In this situation, the driver will be issued the separate school bus permit document once all background record checks and medical forms have been reviewed.

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After September 30, 2005, any driver who has not updated their CDL with the approved endorsement must meet all requirements for a new school bus endorsement including written and skills testing, finger print, medical, and school bus endorsement/permit application forms.

It is our intent to keep you informed throughout this transition. If you have questions regarding this notice, please contact Karen Yokley at (573) 751-2529 or Gina Wisch at (573) 526-3555. Any questions regarding the availability of testing locations in your area may be addressed to the MSHP Examination Division at (573) 751-2341.

c: Raymond Hune, Director, Division of Motor Vehicle and Drivers Licensing
Karen Yokley
Gina Wisch
MSHP Examination Division